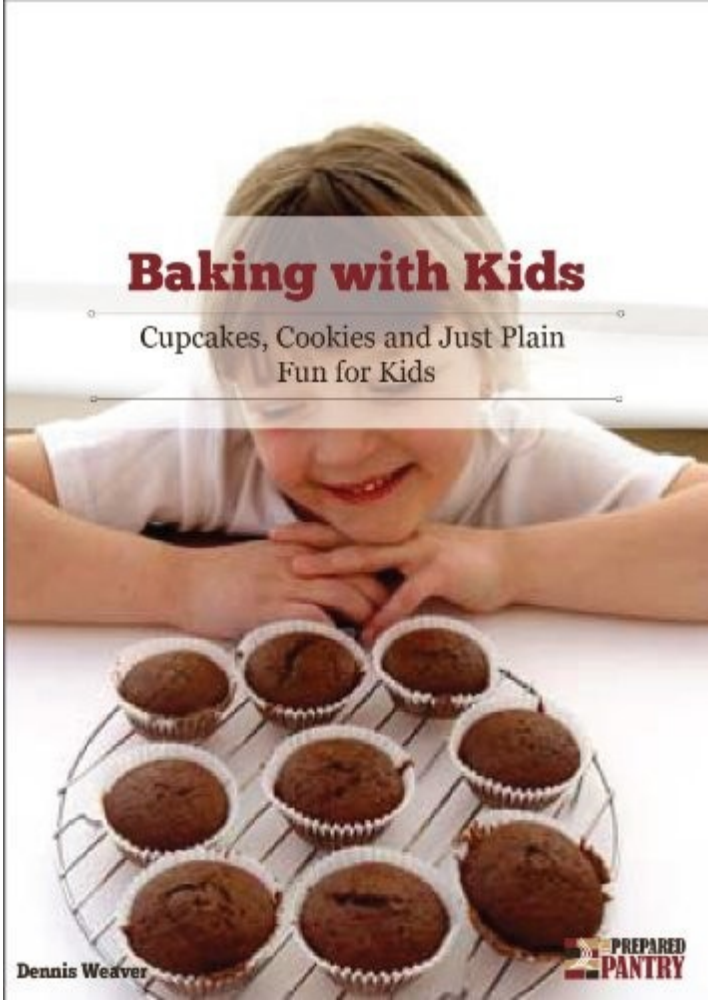
Baking with Kids
Cupcakes, Cookies and Just Plain Fun for Kids
Dennis Weaver
PREPARED PANTRY

VISIT...

Baking with Kids

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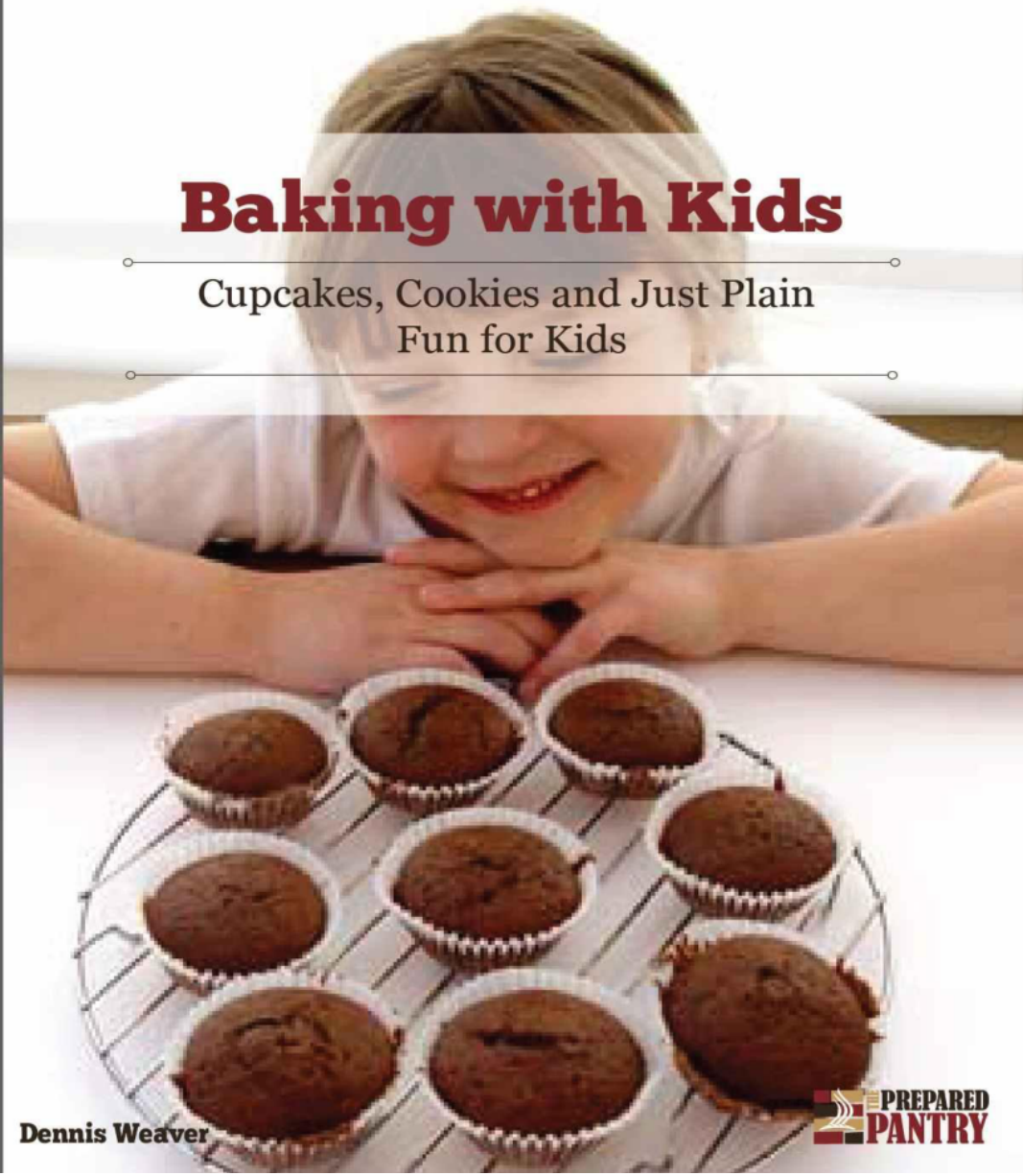

Dennis Weaver

THE PREPARED PANTRY

Baking with Kids: Cupcakes, Cookies, and a Just Plain Fun for Kids

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Introduction:
The Joys and Rewards of Baking with Kids

For my eighth birthday, my mother gave me a cookbook. It wasn't much of a cookbook, but it was mine. I can remember her helping me through those recipes until soon, I was confident enough to tackle many of them on my own. It changed my life. It started a lifelong love of cooking.

That cookbook also provided a wealth of shared experiences with my mother. The greatest conversations that I recall from my childhood and youth took place in that kitchen. The cookbook is long gone but the memories, the lessons that I learned from my mother, and my passion for baking remain. I'm glad that my mother had the wisdom to give such an unusual gift to an eight year old boy.

Recently, I was baking at my brother's house. Soon my nephew's three and four year-old kids pulled up stools and pitched in. By the time the scones were mixed, there was a little flour on the floor, a lot on the kids, and we had dug a few egg shell pieces out of the dough, but the gleeful chatter made it worthwhile.

Cooking with small kids can be a joy for them and for you. Cooking with older kids, especially a teenager, will pass on life skills and create memorable, shared accomplishments. Maybe, just maybe, a lot more will come out of the experience than a chocolate cake. We read about one smart mother who used the kitchen as a parenting tool. Whenever one of her daughters had a crisis--from a fender bender to a broken heart--she would head for the kitchen with that daughter in tow. There she would bake something with her daughter and make it all better. I'm sure the cakes and the pies were minor contributions. The conversations, the friendships, and the opportunity to mutually engage in a constructive conversation were invaluable.

Whether with your children, your grandchildren, or the neighborhood children, don't miss the opportunity to bake with kids. Our desire is that these recipes will come to represent many happy moments and memories for you and the kids in your life.

Dennis Weaver, The
Prepared Pantry

Part I: How to Bake with Kids

Bake What They Like

It's pretty hard to get the kids excited about something they don't like. So our first rule in selecting recipes for this collection was: "Is this something Johnny will like?" Kids have different tastes but generally they like simple flavors—chocolate, peanut butter, bananas—and often don't care for nuts and dried fruit. So most of these are straightforward, kid-proven flavors and we left the nuts and dried fruit out.

These recipes have differing degrees of complexity. This leaves room for choosing to cook with your little tykes or your teenagers. If your youngster wants to tackle a more complex recipe, that's okay—it will just require more hands-on involvement from you.

We selected a range of recipe types. When you find one that suits you and your kids, look for similar recipes on our website or elsewhere on the internet.

Oh, and just for the fun of it, we included some recipes for children's activities—recipes like play dough and face paint. Use these for birthday parties, holidays or any fun weekend at home. Your kids will love these.

Mixes are great for baking with kids. Simply add a few ingredients and you're done! See the huge selection of baking mixes at The Prepared Pantry > >

Helping Kids Grow—in the Kitchen

Cooking is about confidence and creativity. The kitchen is a wonderful place for children to gain that confidence, explore, and develop new skills. It's a wonderful place to build relationships and memories with a parent or grandparent, and a child is not just learning to cook; he or she is developing lifelong skills and habits that will help him or her well outside the kitchen.

Explain how things work

Baking is a mixture of science and artistry. Teach your child both. Why do you weigh the dough for the rolls? (So that the rolls will be of uniform size.) What makes those same rolls rise? (Don't just tell him about the yeast, explain how yeast works in terms appropriate for his age.)

Don't judge

Results are rarely perfect. So what? Even if the cookies aren't round and uniform, your child will likely think they are perfect. Don't tell him/her otherwise. You can make suggestions but praise profusely and give credit generously.

Share your enthusiasm

Kids have built in radar. They know where your head is at, if you love what you are doing. If you love what you are doing, chances are that they will too. If they love the experience, they may develop a lifelong love of cooking and baking.

Teach clean-up

Most things in life require clean-up. Teach them to clean-up in the kitchen and they'll be better about completing the task in life's other pursuits.

Encourage exploration

Kids learn by experimentation. Let your child experiment with different colors or shapes. Maybe the result won't be showcase-like but he or she will think they are terrific. Try new recipes and projects. If your child sees that you are willing to try something new, he or she will be more inclined to. You will engender creativity and confidence. Even when the cake doesn't turn out just right, there is an opportunity for a lesson.

Play the "what if" game

"What if we don't put eggs in the dough?" Help Johnny understand that most cookies aren't very good without eggs. Let him come to the conclusion that maybe we really ought to add eggs even though he

doesn’t like eggs.

Let the kids do it

As your child gets older, you will become the kitchen coach not the cook. But even when young, find tasks that your child can do by himself or herself. (You can always dig out an eggshell later.) Remember, you’re building a child, not baking cookies. The more he or she does with only your supervision, the more confident he or she will become.

10 Tips to Make Your Baking a Success

1. **Keep it safe.** Teach your kids safety. Keep younger children away from a hot stove and sharp knives. Even very young children will want to put the flour in the mixing bowl or break an egg. Turn the mixer off and let them do it.

2. **Keep it simple.** Choose simpler recipes and quicker recipes for young kids.
Kids love to get their hands in the dough. Consider a cookie recipe, like
snickerdoodles, where the cookies are hand-formed.

3. **Make it feel good.** Overlook boo-boo's like egg shells in the dough. Praise often even if the product isn't perfect. When a mess happens, take it in stride and don't voice blame.

4. **Build kids not cookies.** The kitchen makes an excellent classroom. Help the child read and interpret the directions--learning to follow written instructions is an important life skill. Help the child understand the fractions found in most recipes. With older kids, use the opportunity to pass a little wisdom along—even if it slows down the project.

5. **Take your time.** Neither you nor your kids will enjoy the experience if you're fighting the clock. It takes twice as long to bake with kids, but it is worth it!

6. **Keep it clean.** Teach good hygiene habits. Teach kids to wash their hands often and to clean and disinfect the counters. Help them use clean sponges and dishtowels.

7. Teach ingredients. Teach them the basics of ingredients. Explain how yeast works or baking soda. Show them the difference between granulated sugar, brown sugar, and confectioners' sugar.

8. Keep that food safe. Teach them food safety principles. Make them aware of dangerous bacteria and how they thrive. Teach them to keep hot foods hot (over 140 degrees) and cold foods cold (under 40 degrees).

9. **Consider mixes.** Have a few mixes on hand for cooking with kids. With a mix, there is less that can go wrong. Since it takes less time to bake, a mix may be more suitable for a child's attention span or may better fit an available block of time.

10. Clean it up. Teach them to clean up as they go and afterwards. Let them know that the job is not done until the kitchen is clean.

Bag Lunch Ideas

One year, our oldest daughter decided that bag lunches were the way to go. We both have fond memories of the experience . . . kind of a daddy-daughter thing. We would like to share some ideas that will help make your lunch bagging memorable.

• Put a note in every bag. It doesn't have to be long. “I'm proud of you,” or “Thanks for helping with the dishes last night,” will give your child something to look forward to in every lunch. Sign it, “Love, Mom or Dad.” If you are bagging for a spouse, make it a romantic note.

• Get some hard candies or mints. Put one in every bag.

• Make lunch a community event. If appropriate, put some extra cookies or candies in the bag for your child to share with her friends. Remember, lunches are social events for children also.

• Fit your creativity to your child. Some children want the same lunch everyday, a favorite lunch that they enjoy. Others like something different and love to be surprised.

• Include Jell-o or pudding with lunches. Use small plastic containers or save your yogurt containers, wash, and reuse them. Packing your own is much less expensive than buying individual packs at the store.

• Check out the “lunchables” at the grocery store. They are small, low in nutrition, and expensive but they did their market research—kids like them. Make duplicates of your child's favorites with crackers, small portions of meat, and a snack.

• Freeze your beverage before packing. Consider milk, water, or a fruit juice.

• Add variety by choosing different breads. Consider sandwich rolls, hamburger buns, Hawaiian bread, or pita bread.

• Flour tortillas spread with cream cheeses or peanut butter and rolled up jellyroll style make great sandwiches. We used tortillas and flavored cream cheese to make trail lunches when on hiking trips with scouts and they were always welcome. A favorite was cream cheese sprinkled with dried pineapple bits.

• Add a splash of color to your child's lunch—use colored plastic wrap instead of clear.

• Kids love to dip. Apple slices in a caramel dip, carrots in their favorite dressing, or bread sticks in peanut butter work well. (See our recipe for Caramel Apple Dip.)

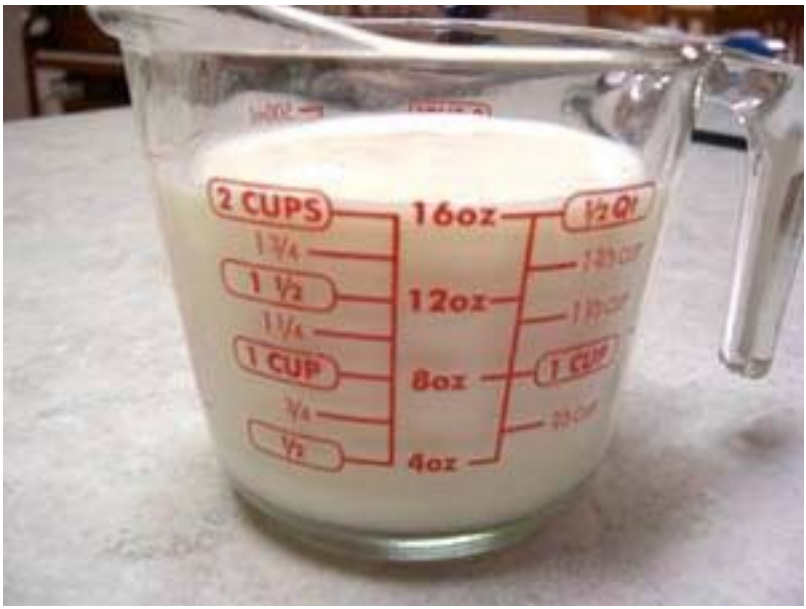
• Speaking of peanut butter, kids love peanut butter. Peanut butter and jelly is the all-time favorite kids' sandwich but try others also—banana or apple slices, honey, or cream cheese.

• Make some trail mix or Kid's Party Munch.

• Cut sandwiches into shapes. Use cookie cutters or a sharp knife to cut into rectangles or triangles.

How to Measure Properly

There's a right way and a wrong way to measure, and by measuring right, you will get the consistent results you are looking for. Take this opportunity to teach the kids proper measuring techniques in baking and cooking.



To measure liquids: Use a clear glass measuring cup, one designed for liquids. Fill it to the mark and set it on the counter or on a shelf at eye level and look through the glass. Never try to hold the glass up to your eyes--it will never be as level and steady as on the counter.

To measure dry ingredients: Use a dry measure of the capacity you wish to measure--either a spoon or a cup. For a cup, stir to loosen and unpack the ingredients then lightly spoon them into the

cup. Level the top with a spatula or the back of a knife. Except for brown sugar, never pack the ingredients into the measure. When using a measuring spoon, scrape the top level as you do when measuring with a cup.

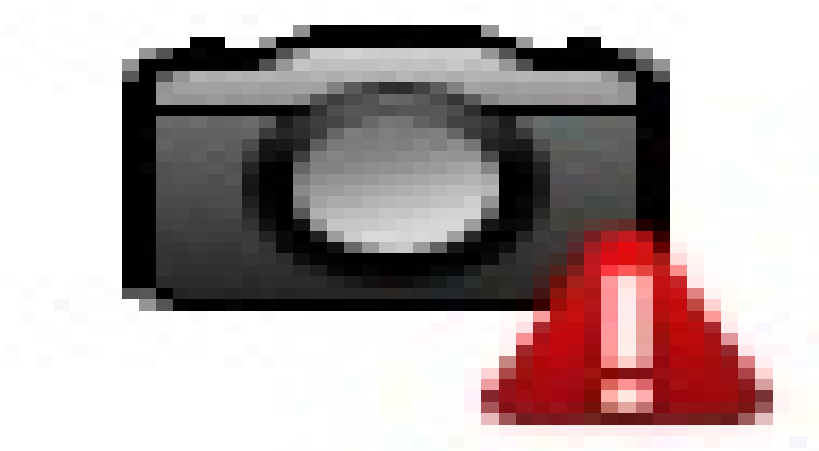
To measure herbs: Lightly fill the spoon to the top with herbs but do not level with a spatula as you would with powdered ingredients. Dump the herbs into your hand and crush them to release the flavors before adding them to the recipe.

To measure shortening: Pack the shortening into a dry measure with the back of a spoon or spatula pressing to force out any air pockets, then level it by scraping the top of the cup.

Flour can be tricky to measure. We always use a scale to get accurate, consistent measurements. If you use a dry measuring cup, stir the flour to fluff and

loosen it--packed flour will
weigh considerably more than
loosened flour-- then spoon it
into the measuring cup.
Also, scooping the flour out of the bag with the measuring cup rather than spooning flour into the cup will give you significantly more flour--enough more that the results of the recipe may vary considerably.
See the measuring tools available at The Prepared Pantry > >

Sugar Cookies



Sugar cookies were a tradition at our house for holidays—Christmas, Valentines, Easter, and Halloween. I grew up with sugar cookies that were soft and sweet, plain vanilla, with sprinkles on top. Somewhere along the line, we started loading them with flavors and colors. Now they're much more exciting and I'll choose chocolate sugar cookies over vanilla any day.

Even the little kids love to help with sugar cookies. Let them put some of the ingredients into the bowl. Let them take turns choosing shapes and colors. Remember those little love-note heart shaped candies, the ones with a note stamped on each? We would help choose the right notes for each member of the family—and eat plenty of them in the process.

Kids may log more hours in the kitchen with sugar cookies than any other type of cookies. The appeal is threefold: they like to cut them out, they like to decorate them, and with simple flavors and frosting, they like to eat them.

Everyone has their favorite cookie recipes. Regardless of the recipe, there are guidelines that you can follow to make the very best sugar cookies. We've included those guidelines.

How to Make the Very Best Sugar Cookies

Everyone likes sugar cookies, but sugar cookies don't always turn out right. We've compiled this list of tips and techniques to help you make the very best sugar cookies.

1. Measure ingredients accurately, especially the flour. Too much flour will make your cookies hard and dry. If you scoop the flour with the measuring cup instead of spooning sifted flour into your cup, you are likely to have 20% too much flour.

2. Sugar cookies are made by the creaming method. This is the most important step in making sugar cookies—it incorporates the air into the dough that acts as a leavening agent. Use the paddle attachment of your electric mixer to cream the sugar, salt, and spices with the butter or shortening. Cream the ingredients together at low speed, not high. For light cookies, cream the mixture until it is light and fluffy. For a denser, moister cookie, cream only until the mixture is paste-like.

3. Add the eggs and liquid after creaming, beating these in at low speed.

4. Mix the flour into the creamed mixture only until it is combined. If you over-mix, you will develop the gluten and make a tougher cookie.

5. Choose a low protein flour, preferably pastry flour, for your sugar cookies. Avoid bread flours with their high protein content. All-purpose flour is an acceptable compromise.

6. If the dough is too soft to work easily, chill it until firm. The dough should be pliable but not squishy soft. Too much handling of the dough with warm hands will make the dough too soft.

7. Use no more flour than necessary to dust the counter. The flour will work into the dough for a drier, tougher cookie.

8. Too much re-rolling will make for tougher cookies. Not only does successive re-rolling work the dusting flour into the dough, the continued working of the dough develops the gluten.

9. When cutting shapes, make the cuts as close together as you

can to minimize the amount of dough that will be re-rolled.

10. Most recipes call for the dough to be rolled to 1/8 inch in thickness. This creates a crisp cookie. For a moister, less crisp cookie, roll the dough to 1/4 inch only.

11. Remove the cookies from the counter with a thin metal spatula.

12. When garnishing cookies with sprinkles, drop the decorations from a height of eight or ten inches for a more even distribution.

13. The size of the cookies will affect bake times. Put like-sized cookies on the same sheet.

14. Do not over bake cookies. Thin cookies will bake in seven or eight minutes at 350 degrees. Thicker cookies will take ten or twelve minutes. Cookies on darker pans will bake in less time. When done, the cookies will still be pale-colored with just a tinge of brown at the edges.

15. Cool cookies on a wire rack. Do not frost them until they are completely cooled.

How to Add Flavors and Colors

For the cookies, add a color gel and two teaspoons of flavor. Don't over bake the cookies; you want them soft, not crispy. The longer you bake them, the less flavor they'll have. Heat destroys flavor.

For the frosting, start with a teaspoon of flavor and then add more until you reach the flavor you desire. Don't go too far; too much flavor will turn bitter. Use your imagination. We make sugar cookies in cherry vanilla, cinnamon banana, key lime, and more.

Tip: The Proper Way to Cream

One of the keys to consistently good cookies is controlling the temperature of the butter that you cream together with the sugar. Butter can act as a liquid or a solid depending on its temperature and how it is handled. When the butter behaves as solid, you will have a lighter, more tender cookie. When the butter acts as liquid, you will have a crisper cookie with more spread.

Most cookies are designed for cold butter that acts as a solid. Use only cold butter. (Yes, I know—many recipes call for “softened butter”.) Cut the butter into chunks, beat it for a moment with the paddle attachment of your stand-type mixer, and add the sugar. The sugar will cut into the butter leaving tiny air pockets that will help leaven the cookie. If you beat the sugar and butter mixture for too long, friction will warm the butter until it becomes soft and begins to melt. Using cold eggs will help keep the butter solid.

We have a great selection of Sugar Cookie Mixes. Choose yours today > >

Part II: Cupcakes

There's something about having your own individual little cake that is exciting. It's neat, it's scrumptious, and it's yours. You can make cupcakes with any cake batter but we've included a couple recipes for you to try.

At a birthday party, consider a large cake with candles for the lighting and blowing out ceremony and then cupcakes for each of the guests. Stick a candle in each cupcake and let the guest blow his or her candle out.

Chocolate Peanut Butter Brownie Cupcakes

Not only does each kid get his own little cake but this combines youngsters' favorite flavors: Peanut butter and chocolate brownie, and it's an easy recipe. Simply drop a spoonful of peanut butter on each cupcake before baking.

Ingredients

2/3 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
1/4 cup butter
3/4 cup granulated sugar
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 cup all-purpose flour

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350

degrees.

1. In a medium bowl, melt the chocolate and butter together in the microwave, stirring as needed.
2. Stir the sugar into the chocolate mixture. Stir the eggs and vanilla into the mixture. Stir in the flour.
3. Line nine muffin cups with paper liners. Divide the batter between the nine liners.
Put a half teaspoon of peanut butter in the center of each.
4. Bake for 20 minutes. Do not over bake. A toothpick should still have gooey crumbs on it if tested. Cool on a wire rack.

Note: This recipe makes 9 cupcakes.
It can be doubled.

Chocolate Cheesecake Cupcakes

This is a fun cupcake that doesn't need to be frosted. It's a wonderful combination of double chocolate and cheesecake filling made into a moist, scrumptious cupcake. It's kind of a surprising little cupcake. The tops and the bottoms are made of moist chocolate cake. The middle is marbled with cheesecake filling. Inside, you will find a sprinkling of chocolate chips.

This would be a fun recipe to make with older kids--those who have a little experience in the kitchen.

Ingredients

6 ounces light cream cheese

1 large egg
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1/3 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
2 ounces unsweetened baking chocolate
1-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon salt
6 tablespoons cold butter
1 cup granulated sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 large eggs
powdered sugar for dusting (optional)

Directions

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees

1. For the filling, mix the cream cheese and egg together until smooth. Add the sugar and vanilla and blend well. Stir in the chocolate chips by hand. Set aside.
2. For the cake, melt the baking chocolate in the microwave.
3. Mix the flour, baking soda, and salt in a small bowl.
4. Cream the butter and sugar together. Add the melted chocolate. Add the vanilla and beat in the eggs, one at a time until light and fluffy. Add the dry ingredients and beat in.
5. Line 12-14 muffin tins with paper liners. Place a spoonful of chocolate batter into each cup. Divide the cheesecake filling between the cups, spooning the filling over the chocolate batter. Place a spoonful of chocolate batter on top of the filling so that the bottom and top of the cups are chocolate. (Don't worry about covering the filling—let the oven do that for you as the chocolate batter expands.)
6. Bake for 20 minutes or until done. A toothpick inserted in the cake portion will come out clean. Remove the cupcakes to wire racks to cool. If you choose, dust the tops with powdered sugar.

Boston Cream Pie Cupcakes

Kids will love these cupcakes. They are made like a Boston Cream Pie: yellow cake, vanilla cream, and fudgy topping.

Have the kids help make a simple boxed yellow cake mix. Once the cupcakes are baked and cooled a little, fill your cupcakes with Bavarian Cream. Simply snip the corner of the 2-pound pack and stick it into the center of each cupcake and squeeze a little cream until you feel the cupcake puff out a little. Buy the 2-pound pack of Bavarian Cream at The Prepared Pantry today > >

Whip up a quick batch of ganache and let the kids drizzle it on top of the cupcakes. (The secret of ganache is the consistency. For the Boston Cream Pie, you want it thin enough to drizzle down the sides but thick enough to pile a little up.)

Chocolate Ganache

Ganache is a simple chocolate sauce that is luscious, easy to make, and very versatile. By altering the ratio of whipping cream to chocolate, you can make it thin for an ice cream topping, thick like a paste for a sandwich filling between two cookies, or somewhere in between to drizzle over a cake. Light corn syrup is sometimes added to create glaze for drizzling.

The following recipe will yield a thick, paste like ganache. You may thin your ganache with more cream.

Ingredients

1 cup heavy cream
1 teaspoon vanilla

8 ounces semisweet or bittersweet chocolate, cut into pieces
4 tablespoons butter

Directions

Bring the cream and vanilla to a boil. In a medium bowl, pour the hot cream over the chocolate. Stir until the chocolate is melted. Stir in the butter. Let the ganache cool until it reaches the desired consistency.

For more cupcake recipes, check out our Creative Cupcakes E-book!

Cupcake Sandwiches

We love making cupcake sandwiches! They're easy, fun, and scrumptious. Here are a few examples of easy

cupcake sandwich combinations:

- Raspberry Cream Cupcake Sandwiches
- Lemon Pie Cupcake Sandwiches
- Chocolate Fudge Cupcake Sandwiches

So how do you do it? It's a very simple concept. You take two cupcake tops (just the tops) and make a sandwich with frosting and/or pastry filling between the two. But how do you make the tops? To make it easy, use a box cake mix or any cupcake batter recipe. Then scoop batter into the depressions on a muffin top pan. Instead of making muffin tops, you're making cupcake tops. You can "doctor-up" the cake mix by adding colors and flavors—or maybe raspberry bits like the ones shown in the image. You can fill them with frosting or you can fill them with a combination of frosting and pastry filling. Most are made with only frosting but it's no more work to add pastry filling and we really like pastry filling. (Pastry filling—that's the good stuff that your baker puts in filled donuts, apple turnovers, and cream puffs. It comes in cream fillings like Bavarian cream, chocolate, and cream cheese and fruit fillings like apple, raspberry, and lemon.)

Variation

If you have a standard cupcake/muffin pan, you can make mini cupcakes sandwiches. They're cute, easy, and not that mini—with the two tops together, about the size of a standard cupcake. Spray the inside of a good nonstick muffin pan with cooking spray or grease well and dust with flour. Because the cakes will not come to the top of the pan, they must release easily. We've had no problems with good quality muffin pans. Load the prepared muffin pan with cake batter but only to about 3/4 inch deep. We use a medium ice cream scoop (one-inch) to put the perfect amount of batter in each cavity and make uniformly-sized cakes. Bake for about 9-10 minutes or until done. Once they are baked and cooled a bit, put frosting and/or pastry filling on the bottoms of half of the cupcakes and cover them with the rest of the cupcake tops to make sandwiches.

See our great selection of pastry fillings here > >

See also our frosting mixes!

Part III: Cookies

Hand Form Cookies - Little kids like playing in the dough. Every mom, dad, or grandparent ought to be armed with a few recipes that they can make with junior where he or she can get their hands in the dough. If they can make little round balls with the dough and then roll the ball through some sticky sugar, so much the better. Here you will find suggestions for a couple of hand-formed cookies.

Drop Cookies - Drop cookies make great kid cookies. There is not a lot of precision involved, though it is nice to have all the cookies of similar size so that they will bake evenly. There is usually a nice margin of error with most recipes in case junior doesn't measure quite accurately. And there is immediate gratification—the cookies are done and on the rack in a hurry so that your apprentice can savor the cookies of his or her labors.

There are lots of good drop cookie recipes. We included a couple in this e-book that we felt were kid favorites.

Refrigerator Cookies - Refrigerator cookies as kids' cookie have advantages. You build refrigerator cookies in stages first mixing the dough, then refrigerating the dough, then baking. Mostly, kids want immediate results and mixing cookie dough that doesn't turn into cookies right away doesn't work.

We included a recipe here because it is so good and combines two of kids' favorite flavors—chocolate and peanut butter. Consider mixing and baking the cookies and have the kids help fill them and put them together. This is also a very good grown-up cookie so make plenty.

No-Bake Cookies - No-bake cookies are wonderful kids' cookies. They provide an almost immediate reward—perfect for a youngster's short attention span--and as a parent or grandparent, you don't have to navigate a hot oven with a young child around. If it's summertime, you don't need to heat up the kitchen to whip up a batch of cookies.

There are two major types of no-bake cookies: stovetop cookies and microwave cookies. Stovetop cookies are almost foolproof but because many are mixed right on the range— like Rice Krispie® treats—care must be taken so that Johnny doesn't get

burned.

The secret to microwave cookies is the cook time. Microwaves cook so rapidly that the timing must be right on to make perfect cookies. Cooked a little too much and the cookies are hard. Too little and they are sticky and gooey.

Cherry Chocolate Cordial Cookies

Ingredients

1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
3 tablespoons butter
1/4 cup light corn syrup
2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup shortening
3/4 cup granulated sugar
3 eggs
1 teaspoon almond extract
½ teaspoon cherry flavor/extract
turbinado sugar
maraschino cherries

Note: Turbinado sugar is an amber, large crystal sugar. (See photo) You will use this sugar to roll the dough balls in before baking. If you prefer, use large crystal (AA) white decorating

sugar. Both are available at The Prepared Pantry > >

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees

1. Melt the chocolate chips with the butter in the microwave. Add the corn syrup and set the mixture aside to cool.
2. Mix the flour, baking powder, and salt in a small bowl.
3. Cream the shortening and sugar together. Add the eggs and extracts and beat after the addition of each egg. Continue beating until light and fluffy. Add the chocolate mixture. Add the dry ingredients and beat in. Chill the dough for several hours.
4. From round balls about the size of walnuts. Roll them in the turbinado sugar and place them on a lightly greased cookie sheets about two inches apart. Press your thumb into each to form a depression then press a maraschino cherry into the depression.
5. Bake them for eleven minutes or until done. (Do not over bake. They will still be soft and puffy.) Move them to wire racks to cool.

Chocolate Pintos Cookies

Though this recipe has very different origins, it is similar to the previous recipe except that it is rolled in powder sugar and doesn't have corn syrup or the cherries. The resulting cookie is softer and more fudge-like and powdered sugar keeps the cookie soft while the crystals in the previous recipe gave the cookies crunch.

Ingredients

2 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup shortening
4 oz unsweetened baking chocolate
2 cups sugar
4 large eggs
1/2 tablespoon vanilla
Powdered sugar

Directions

1. Mix the flour, baking powder, and salt together in a small

bowl.

2. Place the chocolate in a microwave-proof bowl. Add the shortening and microwave until the chocolate melts, stirring once or twice.

3. Add the sugar to the chocolate mixture and stir until smooth or mix in a stand-type mixer with a paddlewheel attachment.

4. Add the eggs one at a time, beating between each egg until combined.
Add the vanilla. Chill the dough for several hours.

5. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Form round balls of the chilled dough about one inch in diameter. Roll the balls in powdered sugar. Place them on a lightly greased baking sheet with room to expand.

6. Bake for ten to eleven minutes. The cookies will still be soft. (Do not over bake.) Remove them to a wire rack to cool.

Makes four to five dozen cookies.

If you like these cookie recipes, try some of our mixes that are similar to these cookies:

- Brownie Sugarsnaps
- Pennsylvania Dutch Sugar Cookie Mix
- Snickerdoodles

Peanutty Peanut Butter Cookies

These peanut butter cookies have two characteristics that make them outstanding. They have enough butter to be smooth without the “sandy” texture of many peanut butter cookies and they are loaded with snack-type peanuts. We designed these as kids’ cookies but they may be even better as adult cookies.

Ingredients

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/4 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup butter

1/3 cup granulated
sugar
1 cup brown sugar
3/4 cup peanut
butter
1 tablespoon
honey
1 teaspoon vanilla
extract
2 large eggs
1 1/2 cups salted snack-type peanuts

Directions

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees

1. Mix the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a small bowl.
2. Cream the butter and sugars together. Add the peanut butter, honey, eggs and vanilla and beat until light and fluffy. Add the dry ingredients and beat in. Add the peanuts.
3. Spoon the batter onto greased cookie sheets about two inches apart. With the back of the spoon, flatten the dough to 1/2 inch to 3/4 inch in thickness. Bake them for nine to ten minutes or until done. (Do not over bake.) Let them sit on the baking sheet for one minute and then move them to wire racks to cool.

Notes: This is a very good cookie. The honey was added as a hygroscopic agent to help keep the cookies moist.

We used Adams® brand 100% peanut butter with chunks in our testing. This made a very good cookie, but your favorite peanut butter should work just fine.

Banana Rainbow Chippers

Kids love chocolate and kids love bananas. Why not put the two together? This soft, cake-like drop cookie has added appeal with its rainbow of colors. The rainbow of colors is the result of M&M® chocolate candies that have started to bleed. If the mottled colors are a little too gruesome for your tastes, you can use milk chocolate chips. If you choose, you can add nuts but often little types like the smooth texture of cake-like cookies.

Ingredients

3 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder

1/2 teaspoon baking
soda
1/4 teaspoon salt
2/3 cup shortening
1 cup granulated
sugar
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
extract
2 1/2 ripe bananas
1 1/2 cups M&M® chocolate candies

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees

1. Mix the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a small bowl.
2. Cream the shortening and sugar together. Add the eggs and vanilla and beat until light and fluffy. Add the bananas and beat until combined. Add the dry ingredients and beat in. Add the candies.
3.
Spoon the batter onto greased cookie sheets about two inches apart. Bake them for twelve minutes or until done. (Do not over bake.) Let them sit on the baking sheet for one minute and then move them to wire racks to cool.

To get the rainbow effect:

When moisture comes in contact with the sugar coating on the candies, the colored coating dissolves and bleeds. If you want a rainbow effect, stir until you just start to get streaks of color. If you want to minimize the running, minimize the mixing after the candies are added.

As an alternative, you can press the candies onto the cookies just before baking. Little fingers love to do this. You will have no running and you can press the candies in any color pattern. (See photo)

Tip: Refresh those Cookies

It’s hard to believe but sometimes those cookies in the cookie jar get a little stale. Don’t despair. Staling means that they have dried out, that they have lost moisture. There is a way to add that moisture back. Simply slip a moist slice of bread in the cookie jar. The dry cookies will draw moisture from the slice of bread and overnight the cookies will be moister. Discard the slice of bread.

Peanut Butter Sandwich Refrigerator Cookies

This is really a recipe for peanut butter yoyo cookies—thin peanut butter wafers sandwiched with a creamy chocolate filling. This recipe is bound to be a hit at your house. It's one of our favorites.

Ingredients

1/2 cup butter
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 large egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3/4 cup peanut

butter
1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda

Directions

1. Cream the butter and sugars together with the paddle attachment of your mixer. Add the salt, egg, and vanilla and beat until smooth. Add the peanut butter and mix.
2. Add the flour and baking soda and beat until combined.
3. Refrigerate the dough for 20 minutes to firm up slightly.
4. Divide the dough into two portions. Using wax paper, roll each portion into logs 1 1/2- inches in diameter. Refrigerate for two hours or until firm.
5. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Cut cookies into slices just thicker than 1/4 inch. Place them on a greased baking sheet and bake 12 to 14 minutes or until the cookies just start to brown on the edges. Cool on a wire rack.
6. After the cookies have cooled and the filling has been made, spread a layer of the chocolate filling in between two cookies.

For the filling:

1/2 cup whipping cream
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons of light corn syrup
1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

Mix the whipping cream, butter and corn syrup in a heavy saucepan. Heat until it simmers. Remove the pan from the heat and immediately add the chocolate chips. Spread the chocolate chips in the pan and let them melt for several minutes and then whisk the chips into a smooth sauce. The filling will thicken as it cools.

See a chocolate-vanilla yo-yo cookie recipe here > >

No-Bake Chocolate Peanut Butter Drops

Ingredients

2 cups
sugar
1/2 cup
milk 1/4
cup
butter
1/3 cocoa
2 1/2 cup
quick oats 1/2
cup peanut
butter
1/2 tablespoon vanilla extract

Directions

1. Combine sugar, milk, butter, and cocoa in a medium saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the mixture comes to a boil. Cook for two more minutes stirring constantly and then remove the pan from the heat.
2. Stir in the peanut butter and vanilla, then the oats.
3. Let cool for several minutes and then drop spoonfuls onto waxed paper. Let the cookies cool completely before

removing them from the waxed paper.

***Note**: Try adding nuts or marshmallows if desired.*

Chocolate Rice Krispie Treats

When thinking of no-bake cookies, don't forget one of the perennial favorites, Rice Krispie® Treats. We're assuming everyone has the recipe for Rice Krispie Treats. Consider adding chocolate chips, dried fruit pieces, or cinnamon candies for a little pizzazz.

Making original Rice Krispie® Treats into chocolate treats is easy. Simply melt 2/3 cup chocolate chips (for a recipe calling for six cups of cereal) with the marshmallows and butter.

This is a real favorite—our kids like these more than regular Rice Krispie Treats and they are no more difficult to make.

Painted Cookies

This is one of the most fun kitchen projects that we have found. It's both artsy-crafty and baking. It's not just a kid's project. Painted cookies are also a fun craft for older kids and adults. We have seen pictures of painted cookies that are truly beautiful. Carefully painted cookies make wonderful decorations for Christmas or holidays. And since they are painted with edible paint, you can eat those creations that you don't keep.

There are two ways to paint cookies—before or after they are baked. We would like to acquaint you with both methods.

We usually think of painting cookies as a kid's activity. Kids can spend hours making cookies into shapes and painting them. It addresses two passions—cookies and creativity. Allow kids' imaginations to run both in the shapes they make and the colors they paint.

Painting Cookies before they are baked

Raw cookie dough can be painted because it is fairly dense and the paint stays on the surface rather than soaking in. We have tried both egg yolk based paints and cornstarch based paints. The egg yolk based paints are dense and opaque and create a colored “skin” on the cookie. When the cookie expands in the oven, the colored skin does not expand with the cookie and therefore does not leave complete coverage. Because of the pigment in the yolks, the colors are yellow tinted. Use egg yolk based paints and paint cookies before they are baked when the yellow tint from the yolk is acceptable and when the edges of the cookie do not have to be covered. The antique looking flower on the left in the

accompanying picture was painted on a peanut butter cookie with egg yolk based paints.

The same paints were used to paint the lighter-colored cookie on the right. Notice that the sugar cookie did not expand as much as the peanut butter cookie and therefore has more coverage.

You can also mold bits of dough as you would clay. Kids will have a great time molding animal shapes and characters. Help them press the shapes to a uniform thickness so that the cookies will bake uniformly. The seams formed by pressing the bits of dough together act as lines to guide your child in his or her painting.

Edible paint can also be made with cornstarch. The cornstarch does not cover as well nor create the skin that egg yolks do but the colors are true and the paint seems to expand with the cookies a little better.

Cookie dough can be used as a canvas and kids can paint scenes or design with egg yolk based paint. Simply shape the cookies into rectangles or squares and let the kids paint whatever they want on the cookie.

Egg Yolk Based Paint (for unbaked cookies)

2 large egg yolks
1 teaspoon water
Food coloring

Stir the yolks and water together until smooth. Add the food coloring. Clean up with water.

Cornstarch Based Paint (for unbaked cookies)

1 tablespoon cornstarch
Water

Food coloring

Stir enough water into the cornstarch to make a slurry. Add the food coloring.

Painting Baked Cookies

Once the cookie is baked, the surface has risen and is much more porous. To paint baked cookies, the porous surface needs to be covered with a hard shelled frosting, usually a frosting with meringue powder to create a smooth, firm surface. On the frosted surface, bright colors and crisp lines are painted using undiluted food coloring. Just dip the tip of the paint brush right in the food coloring bottle.

The image shows baked sugar cookies that are frosted and then painted with food colors.

Whether painting on unbaked cookies or frosted cookies, simple water color brushes work well. They are inexpensive, you can buy them in different widths, and they clean up with hot water.

Easy Meringue Frosting (for baked cookies)

This frosting should be applied to baked cookies before painting with food colors. Meringue powder is made with powdered egg whites (plus starches and flavors). Reconstituted egg whites dry hard leaving a shell on the frosting.

3 tablespoons meringue powder for
icing
1/4 cup water
2 1/2 cups powdered sugar, more or less

Stir the meringue powder and water together until smooth. Add enough of the powdered sugar to obtain the desired consistency for spreading. Completely cover any leftovers.

Check out our food colors here > >

Painted Peanut Butter Cookie Recipe

This peanut butter cookie recipe was developed specifically for painted cookies. Because it has a dense dough, it works well to paint cookies before they are baked and leaves a smooth surface if you choose to paint your cookies after baking. Because of the peanut butter in the recipe, the cookie is a bit fragile and will not withstand rough handling.

Ingredients

3 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking
powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup shortening
1 cup peanut
butter
1 cup brown
sugar
1 cup granulated
sugar
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees

1. Mix the flour, baking powder, and salt in a small bowl.
2. Cream the shortening, peanut butter, and sugars together. Add the eggs and vanilla and beat after the addition of each egg. Continue beating until light and fluffy. Add the dry ingredients and beat them in. The dough should be a soft clay-like consistency. If it is too moist, add a little flour a tablespoon at a time.
3. Form the cookies. You can either roll the dough to 1/4-inch thickness and cut shapes with cookie cutters or you can roll the dough into round and long shapes and form characters, animals, flowers or other shapes. If desired, paint them with an edible paint designed for unbaked cookies. Or

you can wait until after they are baked to decorate them.

4. Bake cookies on ungreased sheets. Place cookies of similar sizes and thicknesses on the same sheet so that the cookies on each sheet will bake uniformly. Bake them for ten minutes or until done. Move them to wire racks to cool. Once cooled, decorate as desired.

Part IV: Other Recipes and Just Plain Fun

Sometimes you can lure kids into the kitchen with craft-type projects instead cookie dough. Kids have a ball making their own play dough or getting their face painted. (In fact, some of these projects are pretty fun for adults too) You'll have lots of fun with these.

Make Your Own Play Dough

When we were children growing up in a farming community, our parents were pretty self-sufficient. I don't know whether children's commercial play dough was available but we never saw any. Instead, my mother made homemade play dough with flour and salt. There are still advantages to making your own: It's inexpensive, you can make it in larger quantities for Johnny's party, and Johnny can help make his own play dough. When you make your own, Johnny has a sense of self-sufficiency and you demonstrate that everything fun does not have to come from the store. Besides, you know what is in this play dough and when it ends up in a kiddy's mouth,

there's no reason to be concerned—everything is edible.

The following recipe is a big batch recipe. It is intended to be enough for a party or group of kids and makes about ten cups of play dough—the equivalent of twelve commercial Play Doh ® containers. If you want a smaller batch, divide the recipe in half. If you are having a really big party and want more play dough, make two batches--this recipe is about all that can be made in a stand-type mixer at one time. You can also make this play dough by hand.

If you want multiple colors, divide the dough and knead in the food coloring after the dough is made. If one color is sufficient, add the food coloring with the water and save the step of kneading in the coloring.

Ingredients

7-8 cups all-purpose or bread flour
3 cups salt
3 tablespoons cream of tartar 1/4 cup vegetable oil
4 cups hot water
food coloring

Directions

Mix seven cups of flour together with the salt and cream of tartar in the bowl of your stand-type mixer. Add the oil and water and knead with a dough hook in your electric stand-type mixer for five to six minutes. (If you are kneading by hand, knead for eight to ten minutes.) Add more flour to get a soft, workable dough.

Store the dough in a sealed container to keep it from becoming dry. If it becomes too dry, place it back in the mixer bowl and knead in a dribble of water.

Party Face Paint

At birthday parties or at Halloween, kids love to paint their faces. Here's an easy, safe recipe costume face paint.

1 teaspoon
cornstarch 1/2
teaspoon water
1/2 teaspoon cold
cream
2 drops food
coloring

In a small mixing bowl, combine all the ingredients and mix well.

Kids' Party Munch

This works as an after-school snack, as trail mix, or as an after-lunch dessert. Collaborate with your child to use the ingredients that he or she likes best.

2 cups Chex®-type cereal
1/2 cup raisins or dried cranberries
1/2 cup M&M's
1/2 cup roasted peanuts

Options: Any of the following may be added or substituted in the recipe—other nuts, coconut, miniature marshmallows, peanut M&M's, dried fruit, or miniature pretzels.

Mix the ingredients together in a large bowl. Store in a tightly covered container.

A Cup of Dirt

This is really easy and the kids will get a real kick out of it. It is perfect for your grandson's birthday party. Here's how.

1. Crumble some chocolate cookies and put them in the bottom of each cup.
2. Spoon chocolate ice cream or pudding on top of the cookies.
3. Pour chocolate syrup over the ice cream.
4. Crush some more chocolate cookies. Sprinkle the crumbs over the chocolate syrup until you have a cup of dirt.
5. Garnish with Gummy Worms.

Mini-Pannekoeken Desserts in 14 Minutes

Make the cutest little dessert cups! They're like popovers but open and very easy. Mix them, bake them, fill them, and serve them all in 14 minutes or less.

Pick a pannekoeken mix—chocolate, classic, or honey gold.

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees.
2. Mix 2 eggs, 1/2 cup milk, and 1/2 cup mix together.
3. Put a dab of butter in each cup of a six cup jumbo muffin pan. Put the pan in the oven to heat and melt the butter.
4. Divide the batter between the six cups.
5.
Bake for nine to ten minutes or until the tops are golden brown. Remove the Dutch babies to a wire rack. Fill with fruit, pastry filling, and whipped cream. Serve immediately.

Better than strawberry shortcakes!

Everyone loves strawberry shortcakes and these luscious strawberry desserts are even better. Load warm babies with fresh strawberries, Bavarian cream, drizzle them with strawberry

syrup or cream syrup, and top with whipped cream. Or make...

- **Raspberry Cream Babies**
- **Raspberry Cream Cheese Babies**
- **Blueberry Bavarian Babies**

Make terrific ice cream sundaes

Load warm chocolate or vanilla babies with ice cream, nuts, toppings, and whipped cream. Or make . . .

- **Hot Fudge Babies**

- **Tin Roof Sundae Babies**
- **Butter Brickle Babies**
- **Strawberry Sundae Babies**

They are even great for breakfast--like pancakes

It's simple. Just drizzle your warm babies with a fruit syrup or cream syrup and maybe a dollop of whipped cream. Breakfast is ready . . . faster than hot cereal.

Get what you need here—at great prices!

- **Pannekoeken mixes in classic, chocolate, and Honey Gold**
- **Jumbo muffin pans**
- **Fruit and Cream Pastry Fillings**
- **Pannekoeken pans**
- **Gourmet fruit syrups and gourmet cream syrups**

- **Ice cream toppings and nuts**

Banana Bavarian Pannekoeken with Butterscotch Whipped Cream

1. Make the dessert pannekoeken shells as instructed on previous page.
2. Put a layer of Bavarian cream in the shell.
3. Layer slices of banana over the Bavarian cream.
4. Top with Butterscotch Whipped Cream

Butterscotch Whipped Cream

2 cups whipping cream
1/2 cup brown sugar
2 teaspoons butterscotch flavor

Whip the cream to soft peaks. Add the sugar and flavor and continue whipping.

Strawberry Bavarian Pannekoeken with Lemon Cloud Whipped Cream

1. Make the dessert pannekoeken shells as instructed on previous page.
2. Put a layer of Bavarian cream in the shell.
3. Layer sliced strawberries over the Bavarian cream. For best results, use a strawberry slicer.
4. Top with Lemon Cloud Whipped Cream

Lemon Cloud Whipped Cream

2 cups whipping cream
1/2 cup granulated sugar
2 teaspoons lemon flavor
1 tablespoon lemon zest
Whip the cream to soft peaks. Add the sugar, flavor, and zest and continue whipping.

Strawberry Cream Cheese Pannekoeken with Caramel Whipped Cream

1. Make the dessert pannekoeken shells as instructed on previous page.
2. Put a layer of cream cheese pastry filling in the shell.
3. Layer slices of banana over the Bavarian cream.
4. Top with Carmel Sugar Whipped Cream

Caramel Whipped Cream

2 cups whipping cream
1/2 cup brown sugar
2 teaspoons caramel flavor

Whip the cream to soft peaks. Add the sugar and flavor and continue whipping.

The World's Easiest Banana Pie (and other) Desserts

Make Banana, Strawberry, and Cherry Individual Desserts in Minutes

On a busy afternoon, the kids bring their friends by and want desserts. What can you give them that's quick and easy?

Serve them little banana pies in cupcake liners.

It's Sunday dinner and you want a great dessert that doesn't take a lot of work. What can you serve your family?

Serve them little Chubby Cherry Desserts in ramekins.

Your husband's friends are coming for dinner. You don't have a lot of time but you want something that looks formal and that everyone will like. What can you make?

Make Fresh Strawberry Desserts in stemware or dessert cups.

All three of these are easy desserts that you can put together in an instant. With the ingredients on the counter, we've found that we can make a set of six desserts in less than five minutes.

You just need to keep a few key ingredients on hand:

- A package of Bavarian Cream pastry filling.
- Chocolate or caramel dessert sauce.
- Some vanilla wafers or graham crackers

- An aerosol can of whipping cream.

See your choice of pastry fillings Pastry fillings come in two-pound packs. Just clip the corner and squeeze what you need. Put a clip on the rest and store it for six months. Because these are luscious, handy, and inexpensive, you'll want several in your pantry.

See your choice designer dessert sauces Designer dessert sauces are used by the pros to make fancy dessert presentations.

To make the banana desserts, you'll need several ripe bananas. To make the cherry desserts, you'll need a jar of Chubby Cherry or other cherry topping. To make the strawberry desserts, you'll need fresh strawberries. (You can also make blueberry or raspberry versions.)

That's it. Here's how to make them.

Step 1—Make the bottom crust. That's easy, place a vanilla wafer in the bottom of each cupcake paper liner, two wafers in the ramekins, or break the wafers into pieces and place them in the bottom of your dessert glasses. (Or, use graham cracker crumbs mixed with a couple tablespoons of sugar and melted butter—just like you would do for a cheesecake crust.)

Step 2—Place the first layer. Squeeze a layer of Bavarian cream over the wafers.

Step 3—Add the fruit. Three slices of bananas, a spoonful of cherry topping, or a few cut strawberries work just right for the cupcake liners. For larger desserts, you'll need more fruit.

Step 4—Drizzle with a sauce. We recommend a Designer Dessert Sauce in either chocolate or caramel. Alternately, you can use an ice cream topping sauce.

Step 5—Top your desserts with whipped cream. An aerosol can makes this very easy. Then dress your desserts up with a sprinkle of cookie crumbs or with chocolate curls.

You're done. Serve your desserts right away before the whipped cream starts to melt.

You'll be amazed how often these little desserts bail you out on a busy day. And when that prized dessert doesn't work, these little pies make a great Plan B.

Chocolate Banana Pops

We made some of these with our five-year old granddaughter, Anna. She was so excited. They're easy, fun, and really good. They're frozen bananas on a stick, dipped in chocolate, and rolled in sprinkles.

You can use white chocolate or dark. For sprinkles, you can use jimmies, decorating sugar, or decorating bark. The ones in the picture are rolled in jimmies and some in decorating sugar. Decorating bark is not only pretty; it adds a lot of flavor. Consider strawberry bark or blueberry bark.

Choose a good melting chocolate. Chocolate wafers are much better than chocolate chips. Wafers have a finer grind and are smoother. Wafers are made for candy makers and they're just better than chips.

These won't take much of your time. Just freeze the bananas a couple hours ahead. You can also freeze, coat, and decorate strawberries.

You can melt the chocolate in the microwave or use a chocolate melting pot. It's easier with a melting pot—it will hold the chocolate at the perfect temperature without sticking it back in the microwave. If you use a microwave, be careful not to overcook the chocolate.

Melting pots can be used for so many foods. Dip fruits, candies, cookies, pretzels and anything else you can think of. Between uses, you can leave the chocolate right in the pot—no waste and no clean-up.

1. Peel and cut bananas into thirds or halves. Insert popcicle sticks into the banana pieces for handles. Freeze them for two hours.
2. Prepare a place to stand your frozen banana pops. We took a used folding carton and cut half-inch knife slits in which to poke the pop cycle sticks and hold the treats upright.
3. Melt good quality chocolate.
4. Either dip the banana pieces in the chocolate or spoon the chocolate over the banana pieces while holding onto the handle. Be sure and cover the entire banana piece, even down by the handle. Because the chocolate is going on cold bananas, the coating sets up in a hurry and tends to be thick. You can make the coating even thicker by spooning extra chocolate onto the banana piece or redipping. If you are using the microwave instead of a chocolate melting pot, you may need to rewarm the chocolate several times.
5. Coat and add sprinkles to the bananas one at a time. Once the chocolate is on the bananas, you will need to work quickly; the chocolate sets up rapidly on frozen bananas. Sprinkle candy, decorating sugars, chopped nuts etc…over the warm chocolate. As you complete the bananas, set them upright in your cardboard stand.
6. Let the kids eat the chocolate covered bananas immediately or return them to the freezer. Serve them frozen. Because the chocolate sets up right away on the frozen bananas, the kids can eat them right away—perfect for short attention spans.

See our huge selection of sprinkles and decorating sugars!

Grandma's Cookie Pizza

This is a really fun recipe. We developed it years ago but since then have developed shortcuts. Instead of making the cookie dough crust from scratch, we're using a mix. Of course, you can use your favorite cookie recipe if you'd like.

Instead of making the chocolate filling with pudding, we're using a premade filling, either Bavarian cream or chocolate Bavarian cream. These shortcuts make this a snap to make and easy to make with the kiddos.

We're making this in a 15-inch pizza pan. If you are interested in a smaller dessert, use half the cookie mix, half the recipe below, or a smaller recipe and make the dessert in a springform pan.

We'll give you a list of possible toppings—let the kids get creative. Consider this for an after school project or maybe that upcoming birthday party.

For the crust, use a cookie mix, your favorite cookie recipe, or the recipe below (press into a 15-inch pizza pan). Bake the cookie dough in a pizza pan, add a filling, and top it as you like. Presto—you have a pizza the kids will love.

Ingredients

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup brown sugar
1 cup (2 sticks) butter
2 large eggs
1/2 teaspoon almond extract
1 1/4 cup semisweet chocolate chips

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

1. In a medium bowl, mix together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt until well dispersed.
2. Cream the sugars and butter together. Add the egg and beat until light and creamy. Add the extract.
3. Add the dry ingredients to the creamed ingredients, mixing until combined. Add the chips.
4. Press the cookie dough into an ungreased 15-inch pizza pan.
5. Bake the crust for 10 to 12 minutes or until it just starts to brown. Remove the pan from the oven and set it on a wire rack.

For the filling, cover with chocolate Bavarian cream pastry filling or Bavarian cream pastry filling. If you don't have a premade pastry filling, you can make your own or use a pudding.

Spread whatever toppings that you desire on the filling. The dessert in the picture was topped with M & M candies, a sliced banana, chopped peanuts, and then drizzled with chocolate ice cream syrup. See the list below for other ideas.

Topping ideas:

• Whipped cream
• Chocolate whipped cream
• 1/2 cup chocolate chips
• 1/2 cup peanut butter chips
• 1/2 cup toffee chips
• M & M candies
• Maraschino cherries
• Gummy Bears
• Gumdrops
• Cake decorations
• Miniature marshmallows

- Chopped nuts
- Chocolate syrup